(b) if so, the justification therefor;

(c) the ill-effects likely to flow if the concept of creamy layer is invoked for the SCs/STs also;

(d) whether debarring the benefit of reservation to those who are already well off in the society, will help percolate the benefit of reservation to the really needy SCs/STs; and

(e) if so, Government's views in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e) The Scheduled Castes population suffers from extreme social, educational and economic backwardness on account of traditional practice of untouchability. The Scheduled Tribes also suffer from geographical isolation and exclusion from the societal mainstream. Consequently, the concept of creamy layer has not been envisaged for SCs/STs.

Central assistance to Assam

688. SHRI SILVIUS CONDPAN: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE **AND** EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the details of special Central assistance sanctioned during 2004-06 for the welfare of Scheduled Castes/safai workers/other backward classes to Government of Assam and utilization thereof in response to schemes submitted by the State Government;

(b) whether her Ministry has accorded sanction of Central assistance towards welfare scheme for the physically handicapped to **NGOs** sponsored by Assam Government during 2004-05 and 2005-06; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) The details of releases and utilization of Central assistance to Government of Assam are given below:

(Rs. in lakh)

Name of the Scheme	2004-05		2005-06	
	Release	Utilization	Release	Utilization
Special Central Assistance Scheduled Caste Sub Plan	800.00 To	731.14	623.82	728.71*
Post Matric Scholarship for SC students	228.28	324.97	490.41	NR
Pre-Matric Scholarship to the children of those engaged in Unclean occupations)	4.22	NR	1.25	NR
Post Matric Scholarship to OBC students	100.02	NR	0	0

NR: Not Reported.

*Includes expenditure out of unspent balance of previous years.

(b) and (c) During 2004-05 and 2005-06 Rs. 22.46 lakhs and Rs. 38.71 lakhs respectively were released to NGOs for the welfare of physically handicapped.

Backward class population in the country

†689. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the different opinions have been given about the population of the backward classes in the report of National Sample Survey Organisation for the year 1999-2000 and in the Mandal Commission Report;

(b) if so, the population of the backward classes put forth in the above cited reports, separately; and

(c) whether Government have taken a final decision about the population of the aforesaid class keeping in view the above said reports?

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.